

CITY OF GAINESVILLE

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department

Geocaching and Letterboxing Policy and Guidelines

Approved by Public Recreation and Parks Board – September 15, 2010

Approved by the Nature Centers Commission – October 21, 2010

Geocaching is a pastime in which “caches” or containers are hidden, to be located by others. General location and geographic coordinates of the caches are then shared via the internet. The principal geocaching internet site is: www.geocaching.com. Location coordinates are used to search for and find the caches using a Global Positioning System (GPS) device. Caches contain a variety of items; geocachers finding a cache take an item and leave a new item and make an entry in an included logbook. The cache is monitored by the cache owner.

Letterboxing is similar to geocaching in that boxes are hidden for other participants to find. Letterboxes contain a rubber stamp and a logbook; participants carry their own book that they stamp with the stamp they find in the box, and carry their own stamp which they stamp in the logbook. GPS coordinates are not used in letterboxing; instead, participants find the letterboxes based on clues. The primary website for letterboxing in North America is www.letterboxing.org.

The City of Gainesville’s Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCA) believes that geocaching and letterboxing are family-friendly forms of outdoor recreation that encourage visitation to parks, centers, and conservation areas. With proper oversight, these pastimes can be compatible with management and protection of the City’s recreation areas.

This policy establishes guidelines for approving and placing geocaches and letterboxes in City-owned parks, centers, and conservation areas to minimize adverse impacts on natural and cultural resources. This policy does not cover caches located in state parks, state forests, schools, university lands, non-park areas of municipal lands, or any other public or private lands not managed by PRCA. City-owned parks and facilities that are covered by this policy are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Application Procedure:

1. Read this policy and guideline document.
2. Determine a possible location for your cache/letterbox and the type of cache/letterbox you want to place (see “Placing a Cache/Letterbox”, below).
3. Complete the permit application, as provided in this policy. Submit the application via email to BarbieriN1@cityofgainesville.org or LordCW@cityofgainesville.org or by mail to Nature Operations Division, P.O. Box 490, Mail Station 66, Gainesville, FL 32627.
4. There is no fee to obtain a geocache/letterbox permit.
5. The cache/letterbox owner must provide all application information and be available to accompany PRCA staff to the proposed location, if requested.
6. A permit or denial letter will be issued to the applicant within thirty (30) days.
7. Once the proposed cache/letterbox and location are approved by PRCA staff, a permit will be issued.
8. Upon issuance of a permit, the cache/letterbox may be placed and may be posted on the appropriate website (www.geocaching.com or www.letterboxing.org).

Placing a Cache/Letterbox:

1. To prevent damage to sensitive areas, caches/letterboxes must be reachable WHILE STANDING ON A BOARDWALK, ROADWAY, TRAIL, OR WALKWAY, or other area officially

accessible to the public. The online description of the cache/letterbox MUST indicate that that the cache/letterbox can be reached from a boardwalk, roadway, trail, walkway, or publically accessible area, as applicable.

2. When choosing a location for a cache/letterbox, owners should be aware of the perception of other park visitors and non-geocachers/letterboxers. Caches/letterboxes that interfere with facility/park reservations or other recreational activities will not be approved. Cache/letterbox locations should not pose any danger to those searching for the cache/letterbox or to other visitors. PRCA retains the right to remove a cache/letterbox in the interest of protecting the park environment and/or visitor safety without notification.
3. No archaeologically, historically, or ecologically sensitive sites will be used for cache/letterbox locations.
4. No burying or digging is permitted. Cutting trees, shrubs, or plants is also prohibited.
5. **Geocaches must be clearly labeled “Official Geocache” with the permit number on the inside and outside of the container. Letterboxes must be labeled “Official Letterbox” with the permit number on the outside and inside of the container.** Inside the container must be a log, owner contact information, and a brief information sheet about geocaching/ letterboxing with, at minimum, the www.geocaching.com or www.letterboxing.org website address for unexpected discoverers to understand the cache/letterboxing process.
6. PRCA may issue permits for “Micro” caches (such as a 35mm film container), “Regular” caches/letterboxes (such as a plastic kitchen container), and “Virtual” caches (no cache container, the cache is the location itself). Multi-stage caches/letterboxes are not allowed due to the sensitivity of our sanctuaries.
7. Geocaches/letterboxes shall be placed at a minimum distance of 0.1 miles (528 feet) from the nearest permitted cache/letterbox. This minimum distance applies regardless of whether the closest permitted item is a letterbox or geocache. The number of cache/letterbox permits for a given park may be limited at the discretion of PRCA staff. It will not be the responsibility of PRCA to maintain any type of “wait list” for permit slots in a park.
8. No firearms, weapons, ammunition, food, alcohol, drugs, explosives, or hazardous, toxic, or “adult” items may be included in the cache/letterbox. Cache/letterbox contents must be suitable for all ages.

General Regulations:

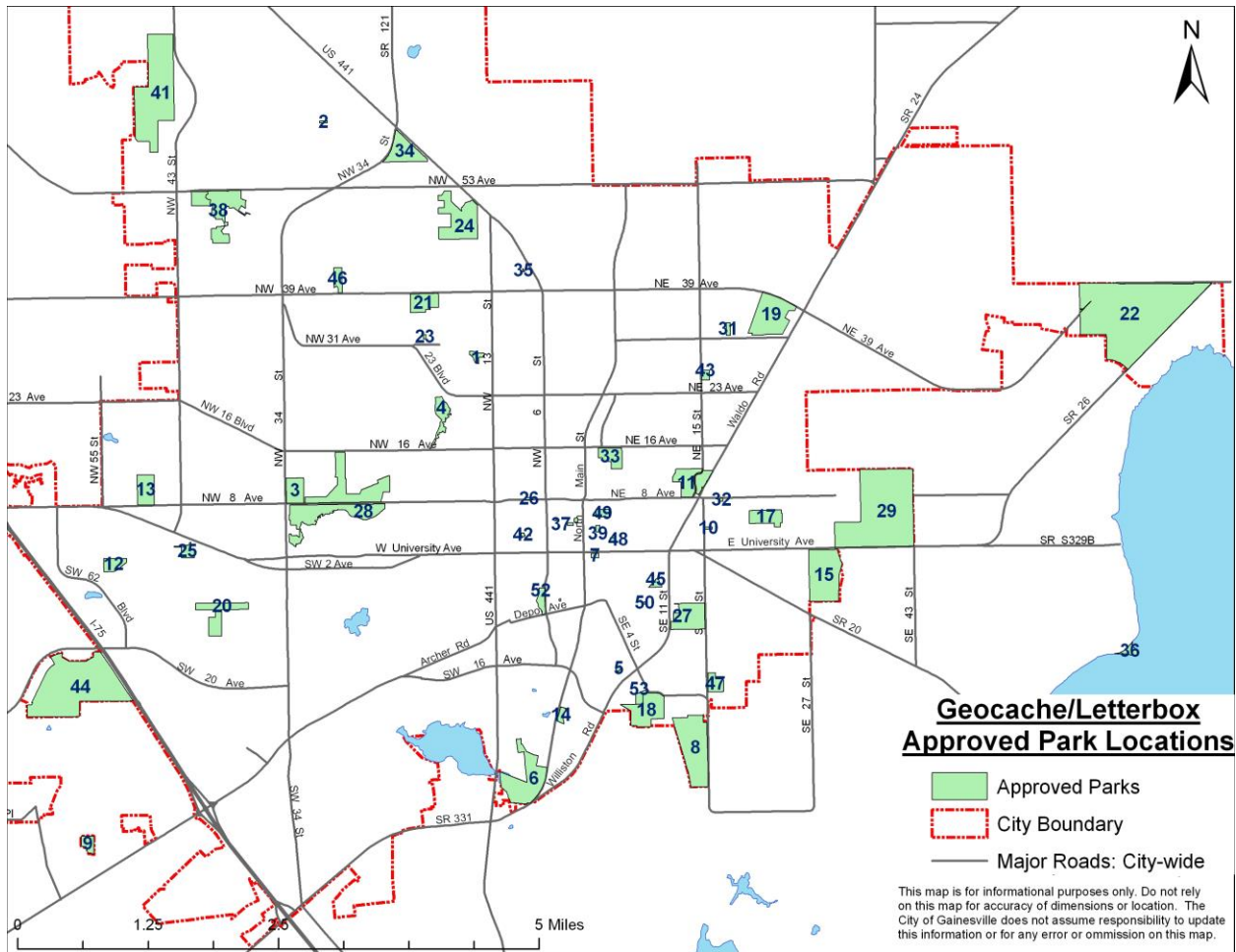
1. Maintenance and monitoring of any permitted cache/letterbox is the responsibility of the cache/letterbox owner.
2. PRCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, damaged, or inaccessible items, including caches/letterboxes damaged or destroyed by prescribed fire or other park/land management activity, or caches/letterboxes made inaccessible by any scheduled or unscheduled park closure.
3. PRCA reserves the right to remove permitted caches/letterboxes without advance notice for any reason.
4. Park hours and all other City of Gainesville Ordinances and regulations must be followed.
5. Non-permitted caches/letterboxes or caches/letterboxes moved to non-approved locations may be removed by PRCA staff at any time without notice.
6. Caches in PRCA parks shall be available to all members of the public via www.geocaching.com. Letterboxes shall be posted on www.letterboxing.org. Caches/ letterboxes with restricted or private access (such as those accessible to members only) will not be permitted.

Table 1. List of City of Gainesville parks approved for locating geocaches/letterboxes.

Park Number	Park Name	Park Address	Park Acreage
1	29th Road	1502 NW 29th Rd.	6
2	A.N.N.E.	6244 NW 28th Terr.	1
3	Albert "Ray" Massey Westside	1001 NW 34th St.	26
4	Alfred A. Ring	1801 NW 23rd Blvd.	20
5	Barbara Higgins	1352 SE 2nd St.	1
6	Bivens Arm	3650 S Main St.	81
7	Bo Diddly Community Plaza	101 E University Ave.	2
8	Boulware Springs	3300 SE 15th St.	104
9	Broken Arrow Bluff	5724 SW 46th Pl.	11
10	CF Franklin Memorial	NE 15th St. & 4th Ave.	1
11	Citizen	1400 NE 8th Ave.	42
12	Clear Lake	5480 SW 1st Ave.	14
13	Cofrin	4810 NW 8th Ave.	30
14	Colclough Pond	2315 S Main St.	5
15	Cone	2601 E University Ave.	92
16	Dolliree Bowens Tot Lot	820 NW 4th Ave.	0.1
17	Duval	NE 21st Street	26
18	Evergreen Cemetery	401 SE 21st Ave.	53
19	Flatwoods	2010 NE 31st St.	75
20	Green Acres	SW 6th Pl. & 40th St.	38
21	Greentree	1900 NW 39th Ave.	28
22	Gum Root	7300 NE 27th Ave.	389
23	Hidden Gem	NW 31st Pl. & 20th St.	0.6
24	Hogtown Creek Headwaters	1500 NW 45th Ave.	77
25	John Mahon	4300 blk W Newberry Rd.	9
26	Kiwanis	NW 8th St. & 8th Ave.	1
27	Lincoln/Williams	1001 SE 12th St.	46
28	Loblolly Woods	3315 NW 5th Ave.	158
29	Morningside	3540 E. University Ave.	278
30	Mother Lucille Perkins Tot Lot	320 SW 7th Pl.	0.2
31	NE 31st Avenue	NE 31st Ave. & 17th Terr.	3
32	NE Liaison Center	1701 NE 8th Ave.	0.5
33	Northeast	501 NE 16th Ave.	23
34	Northside	NW 34th St. & US 441	41
35	Oak Hill	NW 9th St. & NW 42nd Ave.	0.2
36	Palm Point	7401 Lakeshore Dr.	7
37	Pleasant	510 NW 2nd St.	1
38	Possum Creek	4000 blk NW 53rd Ave.	72
39	Roper	NE 2nd St. & NE 4th Ave.	2
40	Rosa Williams	524 NW 1st St. & 6th Ave.	1
41	San Felasco	6400 NW 43rd Way	191
42	Sharmie Ffar	321 NW 10th St.	1
43	Smokey Bear	2600 NE 15th St.	4
44	Split Rock	SW 20th Ave.	240
45	Springhill	900 blk SE 5th Ave.	4
46	Springtree	2700 NW 39th Ave.	11
47	T.B. McPherson	1717 SE 15th St.	15
48	Thelma Boltin Center	516 NE 2nd Ave.	1

49	Thomas Center Gardens	306 NE 6th Ave.	6
50	Tot Lot #2	SE 9th St. & 8th Ave.	0.5
51	Tot Lot #4	424 NW 6th Ave.	0.2
52	Tumblin Creek	SW 6th St. & Depot Ave.	10
53	Woodlawn	1900 SE 4th St.	6

Figure 1. Map of City of Gainesville parks approved for locating geocaches/letterboxes.



GEOCACHING/LETTERBOXING PERMIT APPLICATION

DATE: _____

CACHE/LETTERBOX OWNER INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Caching Nickname: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

CACHE INFORMATION:

Cache/Letterbox Name (as listed on website): _____

Type of Cache/Letterbox: __Micro __Regular __Virtual : ____

Container Description: _____

Container Contents: _____

REQUESTED CACHE/LETTERBOX LOCATION:

Park name: _____

Physical Description of Location: _____

Photo included __Yes __ No GPS Coordinates: _____

Description of hiding place: _____

For a complete list of City of Gainesville parks, facilities, or additional agency information, please visit www.cityofgainesville.org. Please mail application form to Nature Operations Division, P.O. Box 490, Mail Station 24, Gainesville, FL 32627

FOR CITY USE ONLY:

Permit # NOD-_____ Date Issued: _____

APPROVED BY: _____